

REMARKS

Claims 1-21 are pending in the present application.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-21 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hori (USP 5,847,726) and Ogawa (JP 2000-076035), and further in view of Mizutani (USP 6,078,400). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

In the Office Action, the Examiner states that Hori discloses:

a completion time instant of last printing operation is stored in RAM 34B of host computer 3 and a printer's storage means for storing a time instant of preceding purging or flushing timing transmitted from host computer, but does not clearly teach and/or suggest storing a completion time instant of a last printing operation in an ink-jet printer.

Therefore, the Examiner relies on the Ogawa reference and states that it teaches:

a well known example of storing completion time instant of a last print operation in an ink-jet printer (storing completion time instant of last printing operation in RAM 10 of printer 1, abstract, pars. 5, 15, 20-22).

Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's interpretation of the Hori reference that RAM 34B stores "a completion time instant of last printing operation" because, with regard to RAM 34B, Hori merely states that it stores "therein the time at which the last printing is performed" (see col. 6, lines 33-35), and that "the preceding printing time is retrieved from the printing time memory area 34B" (see col. 6, lines 60-61). Therefore, it is not at all clear whether RAM 34B stores a completion time instant or a starting time of last printing operation.

Further, in page 4, first full paragraph of the Office Action, the Examiner refers to an embodiment shown in Figs. 6 and 7 (the third embodiment of Hori), and an embodiment shown

in Fig. 3 (the first embodiment of Hori) that has RAM 34B to show that each host machine includes print control means for reading out the completion time instant from the host memory 34B at the start of a printing operation.

Applicants respectfully disagree with this interpretation of the Hori reference because, as clearly stated in col. 8, lines 63-66, the host computer 130 of the third embodiment shown in Fig. 6 is not provided with the printing time memory 34B in the first embodiment. Therefore, although both embodiments are disclosed in the same reference, it is improper to combine the first and third embodiments of Hori.

Further, even assuming that the Examiner's interpretation of Hori and Ogawa references is reasonable, which Applicants do not admit, claim 1, as amended, is allowable at least for the following reasons.

As the Examiner states in the Office Action, Hori discloses a completion time instant of last printing operation is stored in RAM 34B of host computer 3. However, the completion time instant can only be acquired by the host computer 30 which accommodates RAM 34B and does not disclose or suggest that it can be acquired by another host computer connected to a common network.

Ogawa discloses a print job control device that includes a printer having request means that request time information from a host computer, first holding means for holding, based on the requested time information, a time at which a print data has been received, measuring means for measuring time based on an internal clock, second holding means for holding an output complete time calculated based on a result of measurement by the measuring means, and returning means

for returning, to the host computer, the time at which the print data was received and a time at which the output was completed.

Therefore, in Ogawa, the time at which the print process was completed is merely returned to the host computer which issued a print request.

Mizutani merely discloses an ink-jet printer shared by a plurality of host computers.

Therefore, even assuming that Hori, Ogawa, and Mizutani can be combined, which Applicants do not admit, one skilled in the art would, at best, conceive a system having a printer that stores the completion time instant which is either (automatically) returned to (as disclosed by Ogawa) or accessed by the host computer that issued a print request (as disclosed by Hori), and does not disclose or suggest allowing the updated previously stored completion time instant by “any one of the multiple number of host machined that issued a new print request,” as recited in claim 1.

Claims 2-21, variously dependent on claim 1, are allowable at least for their dependency on claim 1.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

Conclusion

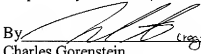
Accordingly, in view of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the rejections and objections, and allowance of the pending claims are earnestly solicited.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Maki Hatsumi Reg. No. 40,417 at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37.C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.14; particularly, extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

for By  (reg. # 40,417)
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